

Vision of Praise

April 2022

From the editor

This month, This time we'd like to share a powerful testimony "Redeeming Love -Engaging in the publication of 'Redeeming Love'" -written by Yumiko Tokuhara.

Redeeming Love

Engaging in the publication of "Redeeming Love"

Yumiko Tokuhara

The first volume of "Redeeming Love," the English translation of Pastor Peter's "New Bible Study," was finally published on August 15, 2021. I am grateful for your prayer. I would also like to thank the heavenly people for greatly assisting the work.

The theme of the first volume is "Redemption." You will see the reality of God's love summed up in this one word. The redemption of Christ is the core theme of the Bible.

At the age of 19, Pastor Peter was in the sanatorium in Kyushu, Japan to receive medical treatment for tuberculosis, and he chanced upon a free copy of the New Testament. As he read it, one question arose in his mind: "Is there God or not." And on July 7, the night of Tanabata (Star Festival), he prayed to God for the first time in his life. Then something warm descended upon him. The thought "Jesus Christ is God!" hit him, and he encountered Jesus Christ. His tuberculosis was

also healed miraculously.

After that, wanting to know more deeply about God, he went to the United States to study theology. There he met famous evangelists and saw amazing healing works of the Holy Spirit, but his quest for the reality of God's love was never fulfilled. No matter how much knowledge he gained about God, his soul became thirstier for the reality of God's love.

Then came a decisive moment for him. At the time he was the pastor of Japanese Christian Church in Philadelphia, and every day he went to the nearby Catholic library to have a quiet moment with God. One day through a passage in Isaiah 53, his eyes were opened to the mystery of Christ's redemption.

Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Through this scripture Pastor Peter instantly understood that in the redemption by the cross of Christ lies not only healing of illness but solutions to all problems in man's life and in the world, and that the mystery of life and of universe is consummated in this one point: the cross of Christ.

Engaging in the publication of "Redeeming Love," I became convinced that the mystery of the redemption revealed to Pastor Peter through Isaiah 53 was for this present time, and

that it was linked to Cosmic Worship we are now having in the Church of the Wind.

In the Sunday service in May 2012 when Pastor Peter first spoke about Cosmic Worship (where all creation in heaven, on earth and under the earth worship the Lord as one), he proclaimed that by the Lord's scourging on the cross, as written in Isaiah 53, His salvation and healing is to cover all creation. I am deeply moved to now finally realize the real meaning of it. The redeeming love reaches all people, including those with different religions and atheists. The Church of the Wind is where the redeeming love overflows. We can also invite those who departed without believing Jesus Christ to the Church of the Wind, so they can receive healing of God together with us. Our healing becomes their healing, and their healing becomes our healing. Thus, all creation will rejoice in the redeeming love and worship the Lord together. The Church of the Wind was built for it.

And by His scourging we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

Treasure Box of Redemption

Pastor Peter likens redemption to a treasure box and says that his encounter with Isaiah 53 gave him a key to open it. Thinking of the treasure box of redemption, I imagine that anything put into it turns beautiful and becomes a precious treasure, however filthy it may be. You deposit your past wounds, failures, deep-seated anger, sorrow, fear, anxiety, and whatever you cannot let go in the box. Then they are all changed to your treasures, making you confess in joy, "They

were all good and necessary for me!” Redemption is such amazing and mysterious power.

In the first volume of “Redeeming Love,” redemption is unraveled from seven aspects. With the seven doors opened one by one through each chapter, the redeeming love of God is revealed from the scriptures.

The last door is “Integration” in Chapter 7. It shows us that flesh and Spirit, law and grace, darkness and light countervailing against each other will be eventually integrated into one Body, thanks to the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Peter recommends us the method of extreme logic to read the Bible literally. The Bible gives us stern commands such as “No one who is born of God practices sin,” and “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

I am moved by his sincere heart to seek the truth in the Word of God. He writes in the book:

The stern commands unattainable through man’s strength in the Scripture serve as a sort of mirror to reflect man’s shortcomings before God the Perfect. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also said:

Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

Our flesh reacts, “No way! How is it possible for man to be like God the Father?” Yet the Word of God rings in our depths.

The more we see His perfection, the more we realize our smallness and imperfection. There is nothing good within us.

The realization of man’s total inability to follow God’s

Word is not to deprive man of faith and hope nor to drive him to despair as some philosophers fantasize. Rather it is to bring forth exceeding joy, for God the Divine is waiting to crack man's heart and pour His mercy into him.

(from "Redeeming Love" p.92)

By having our contradictions thoroughly exposed in the light of God, we see even those contradictions in us accepted just as they are in the redemption, and not only that, Pastor Peter says new creative energy is born out of it.

At the end of this chapter "Integration," a new section was added with the title "Wholeness in Progress," which is not in the Japanese original. In it Pastor Peter says, "Here arises the most awkward question. Will God accept Satan in the end? Should He integrate such an ultimate opposing force into His Being?"

In fact this section was added in response to the comment made by Mitsuko, who proofread the manuscript of its previous section "Cross, the Integrating Power," where Pastor Peter wrote:

The cross of Jesus Christ is the power of integrating the whole universe. When God accomplished the redeeming work on the cross, He integrated all things into Himself.

("Redeeming Love" p.95)

On this part, Mitsuko commented:

"Having read thus far, I have one question in my mind. What does the Bible say about Satan? Can he be also let in the redemption? I would like to hear a clear answer. The book of Revelation describes the praise given by every created thing in heaven, on earth, under the earth and in the sea. Is Satan or

what used to be Satan included in that praise?”

I was stunned to read this comment from Mitsuko, and wondered how Pastor Peter would answer.

Responding to her comment, he added the new section, in which he wrote:

To be honest, it is the utterly difficult question to answer. The reason is simply that I am neither God nor the Author of the Bible!

He seemed to be baffled by Mitsuko’s question. He continued:

The way the question is raised makes me feel uncomfortable, for it would make me subscribe to universalism which I think nullifies the redemptive work of the cross.

He further wrote:

None of us the created knows God’s plan in its entirety. However, I can think of the direction set by God. Man is feeble like a reed, but he is a thinking reed, as Braze Pascal said. It means that knowing his own limitation, man can speculate on God’s greatness and approach His grand vision for the universe by faith. I do believe that in Jesus Christ God will intergrade the Darkness, the very person of Satan, into His Love.

Pastor Peter then introduced Mitsuko’s writing on the vision of the black and white cross, for it describes most profoundly the mystery of the schism and integration of the universe.

Vision of the Cross

Mitsuko

The white light, though entwined by the black vine, was never entirely covered with black. The light was rather stronger and had a power to be able to escape from the twining enclosure at any moment. When the white vertical line crossed the black horizontal line, I thought, “It was completed.” It was the completed shape, that is, the cross.

The cross signifies the relationship between flesh and Spirit, God and Satan, and death and eternal life ...

When the twining black vine becomes a straight horizontal line before the love of God, the white light can ascend straight to heaven. No longer having anything twining around it, the straight vertical line can go up freely to the world of God and eternal life.

This figure stands for our union with God and deliverance from our sin. Hooray!

The clear meaning of the shape of the cross is now revealed to me. The black horizontal bar, that is our physical body in the flesh, is needed in order for us to receive the salvation of the cross and to know the truly tender love of God. Jesus Christ showed it to us in order to give forgiveness of sin to all mankind as the Son of God.

I have always wondered why man continues to sin despite the fact that man’s sin has already been taken away by the cross of Jesus Christ ...

The shortcut is to look straight at the blood of Christ shed on the cross, that is, to believe in Him. The cross is the ultimate testimony for the magnificent love of God.

(from “The White Dove III” Mitsuko)

Yes, the black and white cross indeed manifests the ultimate victory of the redeeming love! I am thankful for Pastor Peter's life-long devoted quest for the reality of God's love. And the essence of what God has revealed to him is condensed into this book "Redeeming Love."

"Alleluia," the Redeeming Power

We have a newly given praise, "Alleluia of the Blood," which sings:

*Do not be afraid of anyone or anything.
Christ won the victory on the cross.
He won the eternal victory on the cross.*

The victory of His blood on the cross is nothing like earthly one, for it integrates even enemies into Love, instead of defeating or destroying them, so that they may also praise and resonate together.

Since I was a child, I had often wondered, "Why do I exist here now?" As I grew up, anxiety and void within me swelled, and I was caught by unspeakable fear that madness must be hidden in ostensibly peaceful society, seemingly happy families and people, and also in myself, and that it might go on a rampage if there was any chance.

When I encountered Jesus Christ, I received healing for my existence. I realized that it is alright for me to exist just as I am, thanks to the love and forgiveness of the cross. I was freed from the deep-seated fear. And then I was further led to praise worship of the Kohitsuji no Mure Church. I was healed

even more deeply in praise, and came to know that what is hidden in the deepest part of all things is praise. God has hidden the resonance of Alleluia in the deepest part of all creatures!

Now a numerous number of new “Alleluia” praises are showering upon us. Through each new praise, we are being shown that God’s love and healing covers all the sorrow, pain and loneliness entwining our existence like the black vine, and even envelops the darkness and sin deep in us. I used to be pained by the notion that humans, destroying the environment in pursuit of comfort and profit, would irretrievably ruin the earth in the end. No such thing! The truth of God is that the black and white cross stands in the dark shadow of our existence, and so the whole earth wounded by human sins shall be changed to praise. I have realized that it is the plan of God for the end time.

The world has been going through the coronavirus pandemic. We believe that our praise is reaching coronavirus for sure. We have kept giving praise and prayer for healing of coronavirus that it may also be changed to praise. It seems that human sins have deeply damaged the earth. Natural disasters occur worldwide due to abnormal weather; great earthquakes may hit us at any time; and there are conflicts and wars within and among nations. On top of that, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has started, which gives a real shock and pain to the world.

However, Christ already won the victory on the cross. What is hidden in the true sense is the victory of the cross. In order that it may be manifested, we will continue to give praise and prayer.

Pastor Peter speaks often about “eyes of faith.” He says:

“With the eyes of faith, we see that all are perfect in the redemption of Christ.

We, the created by God, are all tossed about by turmoil of life. When we realize all things are condensed in the cross, however, we find salvation. Everything, good and bad, light and darkness, is converged in the ultimate point of the universe: the redemption of Jesus Christ.

The love of the cross brings forth absolute acceptance.

In encountering the love of Christ, you find yourself totally accepted. No accusation, self-condemnation or guilt feeling persists in the absolute love. The redeeming love does not denounce or eliminate the sinful flesh but turns it to new creative energy working with the Spirit.”

The redeeming love now reveals itself in the Heavenly Praise. Having the blood of the Lord poured on our eyes, we can see the victory of His love.

The Lord desires us to have the eyes of faith and see His love in all things. The more we do so, I believe the more His love of the cross is actualized in all things.

Lord, thank You for the Church of the Wind where Your redeeming love overflows. The Church of the Wind is the treasure box of the redeeming love. You say whatever we bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven. Let us invite all Your creation to worship together in the Church of the Wind and rejoice in Your redeeming love.

May all creation be freed from its slavery to corruption into the glorious freedom of worshipping God as one Body and as the Family of God.

March 8, 2022